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Globalization and interdependence: culture and development

Culture and development

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits to the General Assembly the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of resolution 57/249 of 20 December 2002, entitled "Culture and development".

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Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/249

Summary

By resolution 57/249, the General Assembly welcomed the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its thirty-first session, as well as the main lines of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration appended thereto, proclaimed 21 May the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development and invited all Member States, intergovernmental bodies, organizations of the United Nations system and relevant non-governmental organizations to adopt a number of measures aimed at ensuring, in cooperation with UNESCO, the implementation of the Action Plan. That series of measures includes the preservation of cultural heritage, the formulation of policies pertaining to tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the raising of public awareness, the prioritization of the adoption of policies to promote the cultural, economic and physical well-being of indigenous peoples, the use of information technologies in encouraging diversified contents in the media and the establishment of cultural industries.

The Assembly also addressed recommendations to UNESCO, encouraging it to promote greater awareness of the crucial relationship between culture and development and, in conjunction, as appropriate, with other relevant United Nations bodies and multilateral development institutions, to continue to provide support, upon request, to developing countries, in particular as regards national capacity-building and access to information and communication technologies, for the implementation of international cultural conventions.

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 8 of the resolution, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO and other relevant United Nations bodies and multilateral development institutions, to submit to it at its fifty-ninth session a progress report on the implementation of the resolution.

Introduction

1. The efforts of UNESCO to promote and advance the inherent link between culture and development were further strengthened on 2 November 2001, when its General Conference adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity[1] and the main lines of the action plan for its implementation.[2] Concurrently, for the first time, the international community unanimously agreed on defining cultural diversity as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature and as the common heritage of humanity (art. 1 of the Declaration).

2. The Declaration is aimed at defining, in the context of globalization, an instrument that would serve for the elaboration of national cultural policies and of their articulation in conjunction with international normative instruments. It is grounded on a number of fundamental principles, notably the respect of all cultural identities and the participation of all in democratic States, the need to contribute to the emergence of a favourable atmosphere of empowerment, the necessity to respect and generate respect for human rights and democracy, the principle of the free circulation of ideas and of media pluralism, and the linkages between cultural diversity and human development.

Programmes for culture and development

3. The purpose of the UNESCO programmes for culture and development is to further dialogue and action-oriented ideas from all sectors of society in order to:

(a) Clarify the current understanding of cultural diversity, based not only on top-down processes (politicians, academics, policy makers and policy influencers) that are supposed to trickle down into wider society, but also on awareness-raising among a wider audience;

(b) Explore the existing, and the countless other links among cultural diversity, dialogue and development, which are understood not simply in terms of economic growth but also as a means of achieving a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence (art. 3 of the Declaration). To achieve this aim, a methodology for development is needed for policy makers, which would take into account cultural resources and their impact within the development process;

(c) Deliver better policies targeted with creative partnerships at the most appropriate level. To be effective, policies need not only to build upon the relationship between cultural diversity and development, but also to demonstrate the added value that the inclusion of cultural diversity offers to development, that is, to bring cultural policy and development policy closer together and to strengthen capacities, opportunities and frameworks for collaboration.

4. Cultural diversity is by definition an enduring and central feature of the United Nations system in general and, more particularly, of UNESCO, which is entrusted with the mandate to ensure the preservation and promotion of the fruitful diversity

[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October-3 November 2001*, vol. I: *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

of cultures. Nevertheless, the way in which cultural diversity has been conceived at a theoretical level and then implemented at the practical level has varied substantially over recent years. The mandate has become all the more crucial in this early twenty-first century era of globalization. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, provided the international community in general, and UNESCO in particular, with an opportunity to draw upon the wealth of experience accumulated and enhanced in the course of a long process given emphasis by the World Conference on Cultural Policies, held in Mexico City in 1982, the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997), the 1996 report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (Our Creative Diversity), the Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in 1998, and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Development models produced since the 1970s have clearly failed, despite constant revision in successive international decades, to live up to the expectations that they raised. The new challenges arising from globalization make it increasingly important to redefine the relationship between culture and development and, more specifically, among diversity, dialogue and development. Cultural diversity, far from being divisive, should enable individuals, societies and peoples to share a common enriching and multifaceted heritage. This shared heritage underpins the sustainability of development for all.

5. The framework defined by the Declaration anchors the work of UNESCO in the field of culture and development. About 20 countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America requested technical assistance from UNESCO for the reorganization and/or fine-tuning of their cultural policies with a view to incorporating development objectives and methodologies relating to culture within the educational, economic, health and communication sectors. Hence, the holding of international training seminars for cultural managers in this regard (Maputo, Santiago and Turin). There was also cooperation with member States in the elaboration of national cultural indicators. In addition, UNESCO assists member States in the implementation of cultural tourism policies, based on the relationship among culture, tourism and development, and in the devising of cultural tourism policies and their application thorough the implementation of pilot projects in developing countries and the least developed among them.

6. The main objective of the UNESCO UNITWIN University Network (Culture, Tourism and Development) is to enhance cooperation among universities with regard to training in tourism, which includes durable dimensions and cultural diversity. In cooperation with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, an international workshop with tourism guide editors was held in Rome, on 4 and 5 July 2003, with a view to sensitizing tourism actors to the relationship between culture and tourism so that the latter becomes a tool of knowledge and dialogue between cultures and contributes to development The proceedings of the workshop were published and widely distributed to member States.

7. The project on culture, tourism and development in West Africa, conceived within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, is oriented towards the improvement of cultural tourism policies (e.g., Dakar seminar, held in May 2002) and the implementation of concrete projects in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, the Niger and Senegal.

8. The Sahara of cultures and people project is aimed at combating poverty, considered as a violation of fundamental human rights. Following seminars held in Sidi Bou Saïd, Tunisia (April 2002) and Ghardaïa, Algeria (April 2003), a network of experts from 10 Saharan countries was formed, and a global strategic approach to development, founded on the enhancement of natural and cultural heritage through the active participation of the population, was defined. The second phase of the project entails the implementation of field activities illustrating the adopted strategy, in cooperation with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, and with the World Trade Organization, particularly in regard to the project on the ksours route, for which a fund-raising presentation was made during the meeting of the international community held in Algiers in February 2003.

9. Taking into account the first main line of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration and in conformity with resolution 34 adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-second session, held in October 2003, the Director-General of UNESCO initiated the elaboration of a preliminary draft of a convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural content and artistic expression. Three meetings of experts were covened between December 2003 and May 2004, with a view to launching a preliminary reflection on the objectives and challenges of the future convention and to drafting a preliminary text. The first intergovernmental expert meeting is scheduled to be held in September 2004. The convention would be a tool to promote creativity and dynamic interaction among diverse cultural expressions. It will also be aimed at reinforcing international solidarity in supporting those countries whose cultural expressions are threatened in view of the current imbalance in the flow and exchange of cultural goods and services, and establishing cultural industries that are viable at the national and international levels. In October 2005, the Director-General of UNESCO will submit the text of a draft convention to the General Conference of UNESCO for its consideration.

10. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 57/249, the UNESCO member States celebrated, on 21 May 2004, the second World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, with a large number of participants from civil society. The celebration coincided with the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition, 2004, which marked the 200th anniversary of the creation of the first black republic in Haiti. The World Day in 2004 was thus an occasion for member States, beyond a simple celebration of cultural diversity, to renew their moral commitment to the creation of a more equitable and peaceful society.

11. With a view to improving the dissemination to young people of the message of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO published a youth-friendly version of the Declaration, *All Different, All Unique*. In the brochure, each article of the Declaration is presented in a youth-friendly language, along with a series of questions that will guide young people in discussing the various issues of cultural diversity.

12. As a follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, UNESCO launched an action line around the theme of interlinkage between biodiversity and cultural diversity for sustainable development, jointly implemented by the UNESCO culture and natural science sectors. The action aims at furthering understanding of

the relationship between biodiversity and the cultural assets of a community, thereby seeking to identify better policy for the promotion of both forms of diversity. Topics such as the linkage between sacred sites and biodiversity protection, the impact of local traditional knowledge in the sustainable use of natural resources and the role of traditional languages in the transmission of knowledge are being studied.

13. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization works towards enhancing the identity of and fostering a sense of multicultural citizenship among its member States. Workshops were conducted to serve as forums for interdisciplinary exchanges between indigenous and non-indigenous experts. These initiatives are aimed at encouraging the recognition and revitalization of indigenous groups' cultural resources, which are inherently tied to their identities, and at fostering the sharing of knowledge and best practice related to cultural pluralism. The mapping of indigenous cultural resources carried out by the communities concerned constitutes a crucial step towards demonstrating how cultural diversity can enrich societies. UNESCO provides support to pilot field projects throughout the world, thereby facilitating greater interaction among bearers of knowledge. Training and consultative activities in this area and the development of methodological tools also benefit some of the most marginalized communities. Further information on these issues may be found at http://www.unesco.org/culture/indigenous.

14. At the invitation of the Secretary-General, the Director-General of UNESCO addressed the General Assembly, on 31 October 2003, in regard to the follow-up to the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage (2002). This was the first such occasion in the history of the two institutions. The aim was to make the public authorities and the international community aware of the broader concept of cultural heritage and the actual issues at stake, which go well beyond the focus on monuments to which cultural heritage is all too often confined.

15. Cultural heritage, beyond its aesthetic, economic, or even sentimental value, has a profound meaning for all humanity, relating back to the memory of peoples, their multiple identities, and to its potential for creativity, cultural diversity and dialogue. It is an all-encompassing notion that evokes the universal nature of human ingenuity expressed in creativity. It encompasses not only cultural vestiges in the form of monuments but also, and above all, living culture and its innumerable forms of expression, known as the intangible heritage. This broader concept of cultural heritage makes it clear that culture can only be understood as a whole. Cultural heritage, viewed from a broader perspective, is rich in its diversity, that is, not only its diversity of expression but also of influence and affiliations, so that it simultaneously symbolizes the cultural identity of peoples and communities, expresses the collective memory of humanity and is indicative of its future. Diversity guarantees creative and sustainable relationships between the past and the future, and between heritage and development. This is the main message of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which affirms that it is on such diversity that all development efforts must be founded. The World Summit on Sustainable Development elaborated on that message by maintaining that, to be genuinely sustainable, development must reconcile social, economic and human demands. There can be no development without participation, empowerment and inclusion, and only culture can provide the means of fostering such participation. If local people are to be involved in identifying their development requirements and projects, we must recognize the diversity of approaches, choices and values that

underlie their development plans: in short, we must incorporate cultural diversity into the blueprint for future societies. Culture may not, therefore, under any circumstances be regarded as an option to be added to the material goals of development. It is only on the foundations of human capital, enriched and renewed by cultural heritage, that future societies can be built and developed. This is the basic premise of the indivisibility of culture and development, which are interlocking bases for the advancement of democracy and equity throughout the world. From the same standpoint, the member States of UNESCO have mandated the organization to draw up an international convention on the diversity of cultural content and artistic expression. Culture cannot be kept waiting: it is central to all progress to be made in the service of humankind.

Conclusions and recommendations

16. **It is necessary to establish functional linkages among the relevant international instruments pertaining, in part or in total, to the cultural dimension of development, such as the Plan of Action adopted by the Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with a view to reviewing the role of culture in the development process and providing a more adequate response to the challenges of globalization. In the aftermath of the World Summit, which emphasized the need to investigate further the interaction among diversity, dialogue and development, the need arises to expand the concept of sustainability — so far used almost exclusively in economic and environmental terms — so as to give culture a key role in the follow-up to the Summit.**

17. **United Nations organizations with a mandate in human development, notably UNESCO, have a special responsibility in helping member States to evaluate their national policies and in identifying new partnerships that will provide a common platform for development policies and cultural policies. To have a long-lasting impact on the development process, this review should cover the various fields of the cultural sector (management, training, administration, financing, including statistical data collection and analysis, etc.) as they relate to the various components of development policies, such as education, science and technology, communication, health, tourism, environment, use of land, fresh water and the sea etc.**

18. **In this respect, it is highly desirable for policy makers in developing countries to recognize the central role of cultural industries (book publishing, film-making, music recording, multimedia and crafts) as not only vehicles of cultural identities but also a driving force for sustainable development, cultural as well as economic. Organizations of the United Nations system (UNESCO, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme etc.), in partnership with relevant regional organizations, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Community, the Organization of American States, concerned non-governmental organizations, foundations and the private sector are called upon to contribute to the emergence or strengthening of small**

and medium-sized companies in cultural industries and such enterprises as musical production, fashion or design.

19. **Institutions of higher learning in developing countries should endeavour to integrate the cultural dimension, both human and economic, of sustainable development in school curricula. In this regard, the UNESCO Chairs mechanism should be enhanced.**